Information Literacy Skills (ILS) as Determinants for Information Search (IS) by Students: Insights From Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (EDOCNS)

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ABSTRACT

The study examined information literacy skills in information search by Students in EDOCNS. The study undertook a cross-sectional design using quantitative research. The population of the study is 637 students in EDOCNS. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 245 participants, consisting of 120 Nursing students and 104 students in Midwifery departments. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data, and copies were administered to 245 students; 204 copies were filled out and found usable. Frequency, mean, and Standard deviation were used for data analysis, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 significance level. The study revealed that students acquire ILS through library orientation and are highly skilled at surfing the Internet for needed information. On average, students have moderate ILS and mostly search for information for assignments and coursework, but inadequate time to search for the right information sources was the major barrier to using ILS for information search. The study was able to show the relationship between students' age, information search, and Information Literacy Skills in Edocns.

1. Introduction

The use of online resources for information by people is expanding as more and more people use information technology in every facet of their daily activities. The opportunity to obtain the data needed by researchers is vast. Information literacy skills are necessary since there are so many accessible information resources and so many ways to acquire the information you need. Mainly, the information explosion has created anxiety among information users about how to reduce the information overload and use information in a more efficient way to complete the task in a minimal period of time. The growth and development of the information society, leading to a knowledge

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society, has given rise to information literacy as the core of lifelong learning. Information literacy is basically empowering people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use, and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational, and educational goals. This is considered a basic human right in a digital world and promotes the social inclusion of all nations. Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities, and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic, and social challenges, to redress disadvantage, and to advance the wellbeing of all.

Information is important for the long-term development of any society because it facilitates important decisions in the face of uncertainty and enhances the range of options that can be used for problem-solving. Understanding students' information needs and the various types of sources of information that may be used is crucial for effective and efficient information seeking. (Nadzir & Salim, 2013). Since the human race has an endless demand for information, finding it is crucial to both individual growth and society's advancement. Kalbande (2019) defined information as a cornerstone of modern civilization on which practically everyone depends. Every individual uses that information according to his or her needs (Silva & Chandrawamsa, 2016).

Literacy has traditionally been defined as the capacity to read and write. Many other types of literacy appear to exist, including information literacy, media literacy, technical literacy, functional literacy, media literacy, print literacy, media literacy on the computer, media literacy on the web, and media literacy in the library. Making individuals aware of the importance of reading and writing in daily life is a focus of both nominal and active literacy. The latter is very distinct from information literacy. It extends beyond the union of these ideas. Kimani (2014) defined literacy as the "Acquisition of the basic competencies of reading and writing numeracy. He further sees information literacy as" a set of tangible skills, particularly the cognitive skills of reading and writing, that are independent of the context in which they are acquired and the background of the person who acquires them.

Information Literacy is not only a machine for Information dispensing; we can claim it as a skilled navigator of a complex landscape. A person equipped with all the necessary skills for handling information can enrich himself or herself and his environment with the most sophisticated information needs. Information literacy comprises the competencies to recognise information needs and to locate, evaluate, apply, and create information within cultural and social contexts. It is important to the competitive advantage of individuals, and enterprises, especially small and medium enterprises, regions, and nations and provides the key to effective access, use, and creation of content to support economic development, education, health and human services, and all other aspects of contemporary societies, thereby providing the vital foundation for fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on the Information Society. It further extends beyond current technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking, and interpretative skills across professional boundaries, empowering individuals and communities (Chanchinmawia & Verma, 2017). Information literacy forms the basis of lifelong learning, which is common to all disciplines, all learning environments, and all levels of education. It enables learners to find the right information from authentic sources, extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.

Okiki and Mabawonku (2013) opined that as the volume of information is constantly increasing, search skills are required not only in order to gain access to the available information but also to sift through the large quantity and use the most appropriate information resources. Information search is defined as a process that involves information identification and retrieval.

Information search can also be described as the process by which people sort information to meet their informational needs or goals. Omah and Urhiewhu (2019) stated that "Information search is a human process that requires adaptive and reflective control over the afferent and efferent actions of the information seeker.

Students are expected to be knowledgeable and to grow personally and professionally over time. Information literacy is crucial for promoting this growth and helping students develop their capacity as independent, lifelong learners.

1.1 Statement of Problem

Observation by the researchers has shown that students at the Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (EDOCNS) find it very difficult to search for their desired information; could this be a result of poor information literacy skills? It is imperative that before becoming fully-fledged professionals in the nursing field, students develop their information literacy skills. It is against this backdrop that this study examined information literacy skills as a determinant of information search by nursing students at the Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (EDOCNS).

1.2 Research Objectives:

The study specifically sought to determine:

(1) means of acquiring information literacy skills by students in Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (EDOCNS)
(2) level of Information literacy skills of students in EDOCNS
(3) Frequency of information search using library resources by students in EDOCNS
(4) students' information search in EDOCNS
(5) benefits of information literacy skills to students of Edo State College of nursing sciences (EDOCNS)
(6) barriers to utilisation of information literacy skills for information search by students at the Edo State College of nursing sciences (EDOCNS)

1.3 Hypotheses

The null hypothesis was tested at a $p < 0.05$ level of significance:

(1) There is no significant relationship between students' information literacy skills (ILS)and information search (IS) of Students in EDOCNS
(2) There is no significant relationship between students' age and information literacy skills of students in EDOCNS

2. Review of Related Literature

There has been a lot of writing about information literacy skills worldwide. However, this review will focus on means of acquiring information literacy skills by students, level of Information literacy skills of students, Frequency of information search using library resources by students, students' information search, benefits of information literacy skills to students, barriers to utilisation of information literacy skills for information search by students in Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (EDOCNS). Mabruka and Manir (2022) stated that library orientation and face-to-face instruction are the ways undergraduate students at Bayero University, Kano, acquire information literacy in their study repositioning the impact of information literacy skills in library and information practice among academic libraries in Kano state.

Anunobi and Udem (2015), In their study Information Literacy Competencies of Library and Information Science Postgraduate Students in South East Nigeria Universities, find out that the level of postgraduate students' information literacy skills and knowledge was high with the grand mean of 3.52, similarly to study of Sahabi et al. (2021) and Kimani (2014), who found that the information literacy skills of respondents were high.

Eromosele (2023) discovered that students search the internet more for their studies than other library resources in the research study of The Effect of Staff Attitude on the Level of Students' Utilization of Library Resources in Edo State College of Nursing Sciences.

A research study conducted by Abdullahi et al. (2015) shows that students search for information more to meet their academic needs(course, assignment, preparation for examinations and tests) in the study Assessment of Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Undergraduates in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria, Thindwa et al.'s (2019) in their study Information-seeking behaviour of security studies students: A case study, found out that most students need information mainly for academic activities, accomplishing assignments, preparing examinations and completing research projects.

The benefits of information literacy skills, Taylor and Dalal (2017), asserted information literacy skills are the abilities that enable people to identify relevant information sources using different search criteria, also Unomah (2014) opined that the acquisition of information literacy knowledge, skills, and competencies among information users is a fundamental issue because competent information users are empowered and enabled to become competitive in using information in a global age. He further asserted that students in institutions of higher learning should be in a position to evaluate information, formulate search strategies, locate the right information resources, and make effective use of the available information. Information literacy is crucial for increasing students' knowledge of topics related to their field of study.

Thindwa et al.'s (2019), found out that too much information (i.e. knowledge explosions) and lack of internet search skills are major barriers to undergraduate students' information searches at Mzuzu University, Malawi.

3. Methodology

The study undertook a cross-stitch and design using quantitative research. The research was a descriptive survey to assess the information literacy skills of nursing students for information search insights from the Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (EDOCNS). EDOCNS is situated in Benin City, Edo State, in the southern region of Nigeria. The population of the study is 637 students at EDOCNS, consisting of 81, 90, 111, and 105 students in the first, second, third, and fourth cohorts, respectively, in the Nursing department and 83, 83, and 84 students in the first, second, and third cohorts, respectively, in the Midwifery department.

Using Taro Yamane's sample size formula (n= N/1 + N(e)2, where n = sample size, N=population of the study, and e = margin error) to determine a sample size of 245 respondents. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred forty (140) students in the Nursing department (35 students each in the first, second, third, and fourth cohorts) and one hundred and five (105) students in the Midwifery department (35 students each in the first, second, and third cohorts). The sample size was justified by Bullen (2021), who stated that as long as 10% does not exceed 1000, 10% of the population is typically a reasonable maximum sample size. A stratified simple random technique was used to select the sample size of 245 respondents, representing 38.5% of the population.

The research instrument used was a closed-ended, self-designed, and validated questionnaire. The questionnaire included respondents' demographic information, means of acquiring Information literacy skills, the level of Information literacy skills, frequency of information search using library resources, benefits of information literacy skills to students' information search, and barriers to the utilisation of information literacy skills for information search. The questionnaires were administered by the researchers within the period of August 1-22, 2023. This gave the possibility for swift responses, quick analysis, and the chance to erase uncertainty.

The questionnaire was designed to include options (Strongly agreed, Agreed, Disagreed, and strongly disagreed) and a 4-1 Likert scale (High, Average, Low, and None), (Daily, weekly, Monthly, and Never), and (Always, Sometimes, rarely, and Never).

Two experienced librarians examined and endorsed the questionnaire to evaluate its validity. A split test method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire, which was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha of 0.81, indicating high reliability. Out of the 245 questionnaires administered to the nursing and midwifery students, 204 (83.26%) were filled out, returned, and found usable for data analysis.

The data were analysed at the first stage using Microsoft Excel to determine the percentage, mean score, and standard deviation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the Null hypotheses. The decision was based on a mean score of 2.5. This implied that any statement with a mean score of 2.5 and above was agreed/high, while any statement with a mean score below 2.5 was disagreed/low.

4. Result

Table 1 shows that there are more female students (162) than male students (42), 117 nursing students, and 87 midwifery students as regards the department, and more students in the second cohort (72), the third cohort (60), the first cohort (52) and the fourth cohort (20).

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Gender	No.	Age	No.	Dept.	No.	Cohort	No.
Female	162	17-21Years.	150	Nursing	117	First	52
Male	42	22-26 Years,	24	Midwifery	87	Second	72
		27-31 Years.	18			Third	60
		30Years above	12			Fourth	20
Total	204		204		204		204

Table 2 revealed that students acquired information literacy skills mostly via library orientation (3.21). Others were lectures on the use of libraries (3.09), face-to-face instruction (3.06), Training sessions and self-thought (2.97), Library tours (2.94), user guides (2.88) and reference services (2.82).

Table 2. Means of Acquiring Information Literacy Skills

S/N	Means	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Library Orientation	48	150	6	0	3.21	2.70	Agreed
2	Library Tour	36	120	48	0	2.94	2.47	Agreed
3	User Guides	18	150	30	6	2.88	2.40	Agreed
4	Lectures (Use of library)	54	126	12	12	3.09	2.65	Agreed
5	Face -to- face instruction	42	132	30	0	3.06	2.58	Agreed
6	Training sessions	24	150	30	0	2.97	2.47	Agreed
7	Reference services	24	138	24	18	2.82	2.39	Agreed
8	Self-thought	54	114	12	24	2.97	2.58	Agreed

Grand Mean: 2.99

Table 3 indicated that items 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 had mean scores ranging from 2.50 to 3.32, thus revealing that students level of Information literacy skills in relation to information search is high, while Items 2 and 6 had mean scores ranging from 2.21 to 2.29, indicating low information literacy skills as regards Boolean search and accessing OPAC for information needs. A grand mean of 2.7 indicated a moderate level of information literacy skills.

Table 3. the level of Information literacy skill in relation to information search

S/N	Items	H (4)	L (3)	A (2)	N (1)	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
1	I know how to use the index for information search	36	66	72	30	2.53	2.18	High
2	I know how to access OPAC for the information I need	0	78	90	36	2.21	1.78	Low
3	I know how to use the library database both inside and outside the library environment	30	72	72	30	2.50	2.14	High
4	I know how to search for information resources (Electronic and books) that are relevant to me	42	102	42	18	2.82	2.43	High
5	I know how to surf the Internet for information needed	102	72	24	6	3.32	2.89	High
6	I often use Boolean operators with (AND, OR, NOT) when searching for electronic information resources	12	66	96	30	2.29	1.89	Low
7	I can create files and folders for easy storage and retrieval of information	66	72	48	18	2.91	2.54	High
8	I always cite all my information sources	54	78	54	18	2.82	2.45	High
9	I have enough knowledge on how to utilise the information materials in the library	30	108	60	6	2.79	2.35	High
10	I find locating information resources in the library easy	48	96	54	6	2.91	2.49	High

Grand Mean = 2.71

Table 4 revealed that students use the internet more frequently (3.32), Textbooks (2.74), and e-books (2.59). While items 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 had mean scores below the benchmark of 2.5, indicating low use of these resources by students.

Table 4. Frequency of information search using library resources

S/N	Items	Daily (4)	Weekly (3)	Monthly (2)	Never (1)	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Textbooks	42	96	36	30	2.74	2.38
2	E-books	36	90	36	42	2.59	2.26
3	Newspapers/magazines	18	78	24	84	2.15	1.89
4	Reference materials	12	96	24	72	2.24	1.94
5	OPAC	12	78	36	78	2.12	1.83
6	Internet	114	60	12	18	3.32	2.93
7	Databases	12	90	18	84	2.15	1.88
8	Thesis/dissertation	6	96	6	96	2.06	1.80
9	Journals	12	96	6	96	2.03	1.78

Grand Mean 2.38

Table 5 represents students' information searches. Most of the students search for information for assignments and course work (3.53), information about health (3.38), learning and research materials (3.35), information for seminar writing/presentation (3.06), and information for personal development (3.06). Items 1 and 2 had a mean score below the bench of 2.5, revealing students barely search for information for fun /leisure (2.47) and current news (2.38).

Table 5. Students' information search

S/N	Items	Always (4)	Sometimes (3)	Rarely (2)	Never (1)	Mean	Standard deviation
1	Current news	24	66	78	36	2.38	2.03
2	information on personal interest (i.e. for fun or leisure)	36	66	60	42	2.47	2.16
3	Learning and research materials	114	60	18	12	3.35	2.94
4	Information about health	120	48	30	6	3.38	2.96
5	Information for assignments and course work	138	42	18	6	3.53	3.09
6	Information for seminar writing /presentation	78	72	42	12	3.06	2.67
7	Information for personal development	72	90	24	18	3.06	2.67

Grand Mean 3.03

Table 6 showed that it was agreed that information literacy skills are beneficial to students' information searches; items 1, 2, 3, 4,5, and 6 had mean scores above 3.00, which is above the benchmark of 2.5.

Table 6. Benefits of information literacy skills for students' information search

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Information literacy skills enhances my ability to locate various information resources available in the library	102	102	0	0	3.5	3.00	Agreed
2	Information literacy skills help students easily access online information resources	102	102	0	0	3.5	3.00	Agreed
3	Information literacy has effects on students' ability to analyse and evaluate the information they need	78	102	24	0	3.26	2.80	Agreed
4	Information literacy helps students master the context of information and extend their investigations	78	102	24	0	3.26	2.80	Agreed

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
5	Information literacy is significant for students in this current information age	102	90	12	0	3.44	2.96	Agreed
6	information literacy has an impact on students' strategic value and use of information	90	114	0	0	3.44	2.94	Agreed

Grand Mean = 3.40

Table 7 revealed that Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 had mean scores ranging from 2.56 to 3.00, which were above the 2.5 mean benchmark, indicating this were the challenges to Information literacy skills and item 5 had a mean (2.18) below the benchmark, disagreeing that outdated materials was a challenge to ILS.

Table 7. Barriers to the utilisation of information literacy skills for information search

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
1	Inadequate time to search for the right information sources	60	90	48	6	3.00	2.58	Agreed
2	Knowledge explosion (i.e. too many information)	54	84	60	6	2.91	2.50	Agreed
3	lack of familiarity with search Engines	42	84	72	6	2.79	2.38	Agreed
4	Lack of guidance in the use of search engines	30	78	84	12	2.62	2.21	Agreed
5	The information materials are outdated	18	36	114	36	2.18	1.80	Disagreed
6	Lack of assistance from the library staff	36	54	102	12	2.56	2.17	Agreed
7	Insufficient time to utilise resources in the library due to closing time	72	42	66	24	2.79	2.47	Agreed

Grand Mean = 2.69

Table 8. Relationship between Information search, Age and information literacy skills of students in EDOCNS

Variables	n	r	p-value	remark
Information Literacy skills Information Search	204	0.64	0.05	Sig.
Age Information Literacy skills	204	0.03	0.00	Not Sig.

* Significance at the 0.05 level

The result represented in Table 8 indicated that (r = 0.64) there is a positive relationship between

Information literacy skills and Information search, thus the null hypothesis was rejected. Also, there is no relationship (r = 0.03) between age and Information literacy skills. The null hypothesis was accepted: there is no significant relationship between age and information literacy skills.

5. Discussion

The study revealed that students in EDOCNS acquire Information Literacy skills mostly through library orientation. This is in agreement with the findings of Mabruka and Manir (2022), who stated that library orientation and face-to-face instruction are the ways undergraduate students at Bayero University, Kano, acquire information literacy.

The study uncovered that most students know how to surf the internet for their information needs but do not know how to use OPAC and Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT) to search for information resources. Generally, students have moderate information literacy skills in relation to information search. This finding agrees with Sahabi et al. (2021) and Kimani (2014), who found that the information literacy skills of respondents were high.

Regarding the utilisation of library resources for information search, it was uncovered that most respondents frequently utilised the internet, textbooks, and E-books, ignoring other library resources (OPAC, Databases, journals, etc.). This could explain the low level of information literacy skills with regards to using OPAC to search for needed information resources. In total, there is low use of Library resources when it comes to searching for information; this implies that the Library is not seen as a point of call when seeking information and thus does not meet the information needs of its users. This corroborates the previous findings of Eromosele (2023), who also reported that nursing and midwifery students at EDOCNS utilised mostly the reprographic service, computer, and internet facilities, neglecting other library resources (textbooks, databases, e-resources, journals, and OPAC), and Humbhi et al. (2022), who found that students' underutilised OPAC due to a lack of knowledge on how to use it. This disagrees with the findings of Gohain and Saika (2013) on the use and user satisfaction of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) services, which revealed most respondents were aware of, used, and consulted OPAC on a daily basis.

The findings also showed that students at EDOCNS search for various types of information, ranging from information for assignments and coursework to health information, learning materials, and research materials, but certainly not information for fun or current news. This indicates that students mostly search for information to enhance their academic performance. This supports Abdullahi et al. (2015) claim that students mostly need information for their academics.

The study also revealed that information literacy skills are beneficial to students in locating various information resources and resources available in the library, as well as in analysing and evaluating information needs. This finding is consistent with Taylor and Dalal's (2017) report that information literacy skills have the ability to enable people to identify relevant information sources using different search criteria. Without doubt, the impacts of ILS on enhancing students' information search and retrieval cannot be overemphasised. Despite the innumerable impacts that ILS has on students' information searches, there are still barriers to its utilisation for information searches. This study

uncovered that the major barriers were inadequate time to search for the right information sources, knowledge explosion (i.e., too much information), and insufficient time to utilise library resources due to closing time. This could explain the underutilization of library resources to search for information by students in EDOCNS as a result of time constraints, and it also signifies that students do not explore their full potential when it comes to using ILS for information search. This finding supports Thindwa et al. (2019) who reported that Lack of Internet search skills and confusion because of too much information on the Internet (i.e., explosion knowledge) are major barriers to undergraduate students' information searches at Mzuzu University, Malawi.

The results from the hypotheses show that there is a positive relationship (r =0.64) between information literacy skills and information search, indicating that ILS has a significant influence on how students search for needed information and that those with high ILS will be able to identify, search for, and retrieve information to satisfy their needs. This agrees with Simisaye and Popoola (2019), who conceptualise information literacy as a set of skills that encompass the ability of the individual to know the need for information, identify, locate, evaluate, organise, and effectively create, use, and communicate information ethically to address issues or problems relating to research activities leading to research publications. The result further revealed that there is no relationship (r =0.03) between age and information literacy skill; the search for information has no limit; everybody, regardless of age, needs information, thus the need for ILS.

The study is limited to a particular institution and the population size is small. The study's strength is its ability to show the relationship between age, information search, and ILS.

6. Conclusion

The study findings of this research have shown that information literacy skills are important to students' information searches to facilitate their lifelong learning. The study findings also revealed that there is no age limit to acquiring information literacy skills for information search. The study implies that high ILS facilitates good information search to satisfy the information needs of Students.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it's recommended that:

(1) A training session should always be conducted for students for them to familiarise themselves with information literacy
(2) Library staff should always assist students in their search for information
(3) Information literacy skills education should be continually embraced regardless of age
(4) The open hours of the library should be extended to ensure adequate time to properly search for needed information

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